

## APPENDIX B: Telephone Interview Questionnaire

### Effectiveness of Human Services Transportation Plans and Grant Programs

#### Draft Telephone Interview Guide

##### *Guidance for Interviewer*

The questions below serve as a guide. It is expected that some of them will get answered in the course of answering a previous question, and some may not be applicable to the organization at hand. The natural ebb and flow of the discussions may open new questions and also necessitate real-time tailoring of the questions to the organization being interviewed. Also, additional questions may be asked based on information from the internet survey and a review of the interviewee's organization and the types of human services and transportation plans and grants in which the organization has participated.

##### *Background Information for Interviewee*

The AASHTO Standing Committee on Public Transportation is conducting a study on the "Effectiveness of Human Services Transportation Plan and Grant Programs." The study is intended to evaluate the process and results of the Federal Transit Administration's grants for transportation – both fixed-route and paratransit – that are funded for Elderly and Disabled Individuals (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC, Section 5316) and New Freedom (Section 5317) as these programs relate to the coordinated public transit/human services transportation plans process.

As part of this study, our firm has been hired to conduct a phone interview with organizations involved in the plans throughout the United States. We will be speaking with representatives from six states, including yours. The interviews are being conducted not only with the State DOTs and federal officials, but also local public and private transportation providers, planning organizations, and human services transportation providers. We would like to conduct an interview for the purposes of:

- 1) Determining the extent to which the respondents believe coordinated public transit/human services transportation plans have met FTA goals of enhancing transportation access, minimizing duplication of services, and facilitating the most appropriate and cost-effective transportation possible with available resources; and
- 2) Ascertaining the cost of developing and maintaining these Coordination Plans (in terms of time and money) to ensure that resources are being used wisely and effectively, resulting in the better, more cost-effective and coordinated programs that the plans are expected to foster.

Ideally, the interview will be no more than 45 minutes in length, though we would like to schedule an hour-long period to ensure that we have your complete input.

#### Questions for State DOTs, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and County & City Governments

##### A. Planning Process

1. What are the principle tasks or accomplishments of your organization in the human services transportation planning process?
  - a. Coordination with other government agencies

- b. Coordination with other organizations: transit providers, non-profits, etc.
  - c. Public meetings/coordination
  - d. Development of the formal Coordination Plans
  - e. Preparation and submission of grant request and project documentation
  - f. Planning for/provision of transportation
- 2. With respect to the required process for planning coordination and preparation of the project documentation for human services transportation plans:
  - a. What do you consider to be the most time-consuming parts of the overall process?
  - b. What element of the preparation of the Coordinated Plans did you find most time consuming?
  - c. Were there parts of the planning process for the Coordinated Plans redundant with planning practices already in place?
  - d. Did your organization have the resources and experience to complete its part in the process, or were other organizations or consultants used?
  - e. How could the planning process be improved for your organization?
- 3. Which organization takes the lead in developing the plans?
- 4. Did your organization have any local and/or state planning requirements already in place that were used to satisfy the federal Coordination Plan requirement?
- 5. How is development of the human services transportation plans funded? Is this funding sustainable?
- 6. How did the costs (including staff time) of the preparation and implementation of the plans relate to the outcome of the new services and programs? Was this the best use of staff time and limited resources?
- 7. How are the human services transportation plans used as guidelines for selecting and prioritizing projects?
  - a. What types of projects are ranked first or of top priority?
  - b. How is funding allocated or spread among the various proposed projects?
- 8. What changes would enable your organization to improve its role in the human services transportation planning and application process?

B. Program Management

1. In the response to the Internet survey, the state DOT's costs for human services transportation planning were estimated at *(insert figure)* dollars.
  - a. Approximately how much did your organization spend on the Coordination Plan (in dollar amount or person-months)? Was that money provided by the state, MPO, or some other organization? *{Note: If an estimate is not readily available, offer to follow-up via email after the interview for details on cost of plan development.}*
  - b. Could you describe the basic accomplishments resulting from those expenditures?
2. With respect to JARC (Section 5316) and New Freedom (Section 5317) grants, what are the issues associated with development of the plans and grant requests for these specific programs?
  - a. Do you follow a different planning process or have additional requirements for these grants?
  - b. If yes, what process or actions does your organization use to meet these requirements?
  - c. How much additional effort or expense is required to meet the requirements to obtain these grants?
  - d. What have been the major challenges in planning for and obtaining these grants?
3. What is your organization's role in the project prioritization and selection process?
  - a. Is this role different among the three types of grants (5310, 5316, 5317)?
  - b. How is the decision made to seek one type of grant versus another?
4. Project approval and distribution of human services transportation grant funds by the FTA is frequently less than the funds appropriated by Congress. What issues has your organization faced in obtaining and making full use of available federal funds for Section 5310, 5316 and 5317 grants?
  - a. Has your organization submitted plans that have not been approved or have not been fully-funded?
  - b. What has been the primary concern or issue affecting meeting the requirements of the grant process?
  - c. What changes would enable your organization to better meet the requirements for the funds that have been appropriated?

C. Perceived Success and Benefits of the Plans and Funds

1. Does your organization have any metrics/performance measures to aid in the understanding of the success or impact of the new services or programs provided through the human service Coordination Plans?
2. Could you describe one of the projects funded by the human services transportation funds that has been successful?
  - a. Why is the project considered successful? What objectives or goals were planned for the project?

- b. What steps or planning process was followed that led to the project's success? How did the development of the Coordination Plan contribute to the success of the project?
  - c. How was the project selected or prioritized over other projects?
  - d. Is the funding for the project sustainable? Is the grant money matched by other funds?
- 3. Have the Coordinated Plans allowed participating state and local agencies and their partners to...
  - a. Reach new populations or communities?
  - b. Provide new services that otherwise wouldn't have been provided?
  - c. Facilitate greater public participation in planning processes with new communities?
  - d. Improve the "effectiveness" of the human service transportation services provided?
- 4. Can you provide any other examples of how the Coordination Plans have improved transportation services to the targeted groups: elderly, disabled, JARC, New Freedom?
  - a. In your opinion, do you think that the improvements and how you used the funds would have been different without a Coordination Plan?

D. Non-Governmental Community Groups

- 1. What was the interest level of community stakeholders/groups that were contacted in the outreach for the Coordinated Plan planning process?
  - a. Did your agency's coordinated planning process include groups new to public participation in planning during the outreach process and development of the plan?
- 2. Did non-governmental community groups that received funds have the capacity (staff time, expertise) to administer the programs effectively, or to effectively fill the identified gaps in service?
  - a. If not, what happened to the funds? Were they re-allocated?

Supplementary Questions

- 1. The human services transportation plans specifically require outreach to other organizations, both government agencies (e.g., transit agencies, counties, cities, MPOs) and non-profit and citizens' groups.
  - a. What process does your organization use to interact with these other organizations?
  - b. Does your organization lead any of these processes? Or have other responsibilities?
  - c. How were these other organizations involved in project selection and prioritization?
- 2. Could you describe one of your organization's projects funded by the human services transportation funds that has not been as successful?
  - a. Why did this project not meet its goals?

- b. Was the project in the Coordination Plan?
  - i. If so, were there weaknesses in the Coordination Plan or the plan development process that affected the lack of project success?
  - ii. If not in the plan, would being included in the plan have helped?
- c. What coordination, process, or funds were needed to make this project meets its goals?
- 3. Has your organization benefitted from the coordination process?
  - a. For example, is there more awareness of customer needs?
  - b. Has coordination with other government or other organizations led to new approaches or developments?
  - c. Have the plans enabled your organization to meet its own goals or objectives?

**Questions for Local Organizations: Transportation Providers, Human Services Providers, Public Interest Groups.**

**A. Planning Process**

- 1. What are the principle tasks or accomplishments of your organization in the human services transportation process?
  - a. Coordination with government agencies
  - b. Coordination with other organizations: transit providers, non-profits, etc.
  - c. Public meetings/coordination
  - d. Development of the formal Coordination Plans
  - e. Preparation and submission of grant request and project documentation
  - f. Planning for/provision of transportation
- 2. With respect to the required process for planning coordination and preparation of the project documentation for human services transportation plans:
  - a. What do you consider to be the most time-consuming parts of the overall process?
  - b. What element of the preparation of the Coordinated Plans did you find most time consuming?
  - c. Were there parts of the planning process for the Coordinated Plans redundant with planning practices already in place?
  - d. Did your organization have the resources and experience to complete its part in the process, or were other organizations or consultants used?
  - e. How could the planning process be improved?

3. How did the costs (including staff time) of the preparation and implementation of the human services transportation plans relate to the outcome of the new services and programs? Was this the best use of staff time and limited resources?
  - a. In your opinion, do you think that the improvements and how you used the funds would have been different without a Coordination Plan?
4. Did your organization initially have the experience and the resources (i.e., staff time, expertise, and funds) to participate in the development of the human services plans and the provision of services? If not, how did you develop this capacity?
5. Were there any elements of the planning process that were essential to the success of the Coordinated Plan outcome?
6. Where there parts of the planning process unnecessary to the final outcome of the Coordinated Plan?

B. Program Management

1. Which grants and programs does your organization have experience with?
  - a. Elderly and Disabled Individuals (Section 5310),
  - b. Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC, Section 5316)
  - c. New Freedom (Section 5317).
2. Obligation of the human services transportation funds is frequently less than the funds appropriated and available from the federal government and the FTA.
  - a. Has your organization submitted plans that have not been approved or have not been fully-funded?
  - b. What has been the primary concern or issue affecting meeting the requirements of the grant process?
3. What changes would enable your organization to improve your ability to complete requirements for the federal grants?

C. Perceived Success and Benefits of the Plans and Funds

1. Does your organization have any metrics/performance measures to aid in the understanding of the success or impact of the new services or programs provided through the human service Coordination Plans?
2. Could you describe one of your organization's projects funded by the human services transportation funds that has been successful?
  - a. Why is the project considered successful? What objectives or goals were planned for the project?
  - b. What steps or planning process was followed that led to the project's success? How did the development of the Coordination Plan contribute to the success of the project?
  - c. How was the project selected or prioritized over other projects?

- d. Is the funding for the project sustainable? Is the grant money matched by other funds?
- 3. Have the Coordinated Plans allowed your agency to...
  - a. Reach new populations or communities?
  - b. Provide new services that otherwise wouldn't have been provided?
  - c. Facilitate greater public participation in planning processes with new communities?
  - d. Improve the "effectiveness" of the human service transportation services provided?
- 4. Have the plans or services provided as a results of those plans contributed to the goals of your own organization?
- 5. Can you provide any other examples of how the Coordination Plans have improved transportation services to the targeted groups?

D. Coordination

- 1. Has your organization benefitted from the coordination process?
  - a. For example, is there more awareness of customer needs?
  - b. Has coordination with other government or other organizations led to new approaches or developments?

Supplementary Questions

- 1. The human services transportation plans specifically require outreach to other organizations, both government agencies (e.g., transit agencies, counties, cities, MPOs) and non-profit and citizens' groups.
  - a. What process does your organization use to interact with these other organizations?
  - b. Does your organization lead any of these processes? Or have other responsibilities?
  - c. Was your organization's participation in the process new? How about your participation in development of the human services transportation plan?
- 2. In reference to the successful projects of your organization, could you describe the benefits to the customers or clients of the project?
  - a. How are these customers' needs served by this project?
  - b. What services were provided before?
  - c. Were other alternatives considered by your organization in the planning of the human services transportation plans?

3. Could you describe one of your organization's projects that has not been as successful?
  - a. Why did this project not meet its goals?
  - b. Was the project in the Coordination Plan?
    - i. If so, were there weaknesses in the Coordination Plan or the plan development process that affected the lack of project success?
    - ii. If not in the plan, would being included in the plan have helped?
  - c. What coordination, process, or funds were needed to make this project meets its goals?